

**REMARKS**

In the Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claims 1 through 27 are pending in the application and the Examiner rejected all claims.

**The Present Invention**

The present invention provides a method in a data processing system for modifying existing rules used to process electronic messages. Rather than using prior art methods, whereby rules are modified by a user, in accordance with the present invention, when a user is detected moving an email into a folder, characteristics of the email are identified and used to automatically modify an existing rule for email in that particular folder. If other messages exist in the folder and the user has selected these other messages, the characteristics of the new message are compared with the other electronic messages in the folder to form a comparison. An existing rule for processing the electronic message is then modified based on the comparison, if appropriate. The user is given the ability to accept, reject, or change the modified rule.

**The Claim Rejections**

In item 2 on page 1 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-19, and 21-27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,899,995 to Millier et al. ("Millier") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,216,122 to Elson ("Elson").

At item 3 on page 6 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 5 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Millier et al. and Elson and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,978,566 to Plank et al.

Applicant provided detailed traversals of these rejections in the Office Action filed on July 10, 2003. Applicant reiterates these arguments herein and will rely upon same in any appeal hereof. Most significantly on point, the present claimed invention is directed a method and system for modifying rules to process electronic messages (email). Rather than relying upon user input to decide what rule should be applied, the present invention parses the email message and identifies commonality between the email messages. Rules are then modified based on the comparison. Having the system modify the rules frees the user from having to go through the trouble of identifying which rules to apply and how to have them applied.

None of the references cited by the Examiner in the 103 rejections teach or suggest these features. Each of them rely upon creation/modification of rules by the user and then application of these rules to existing emails, or, in the case of Millier, files. For these reasons, as well as the reasons set forth in the Response to the Office Action filed on July 10, 2003, the present invention patentably defines over, and is not obvious in view of, the prior art.

#### **Claim Amendments**

As the Examiner pointed out in the August 1, 2003 Office Action, the claims prior to the amendments contained herein, did not contain mention of the phrase "automatic" modification with respect to the rules. Applicant submits that since none of the references teach the modification of rules in the manner claimed, the present claims do not require the term "automatic" to be included. However, in an attempt to place the claims in allowable condition, applicant has amended the claims to specifically recite the automatic modification of rules. In addition to not teaching or suggesting the modification of rules, none of the prior

art cited teaches the automatic modification of rules. Accordingly, applicant submits that the claims are in allowable condition.

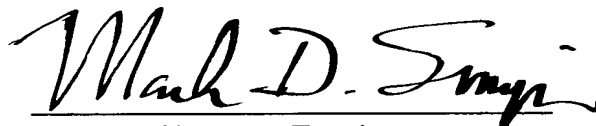
**Conclusion**

The present invention is not taught or suggested by the prior art. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of the claims. An early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees associated with this communication to Deposit Account No. 19-5425.

Respectfully submitted

1 Dec. 2003  
Date

  
Mark D. Simpson, Esquire  
Registration No. 32,942

SYNNESTVEDT & LECHNER LLP  
2600 ARAMARK Tower  
1101 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Telephone: (215) 923-4466  
Facsimile: (215) 923-2189